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G.S. Sivarudrappa

# BETWEEN YOU AND ME

Translation
O. L. Nagabhushana Swamy









# BETWEEN YOU AND ME

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunkonda, 2nd century A.D.
Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi

G.S. SIVARUDRAPPA

# BETWEEN YOU AND ME

Translated and edited
by
O. L. Nagabhushana Swamy



Sahitya Akademi

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## Poetry of G.S. Sivarudrappa

G.S. Sivarudrappa is a veteran of Kannada letters, and important poet and critic in Kannada. To date he has published 12 collections of poems, 13 books of literary criticism, 3 travelogues and 1 biography. Generations of readers have enjoyed his poems. The fact that his *complete Poems* have undergone three prints in the last nine years is a testimony of his popularity as poet. As a critic he values the importance of tradition and continuity in literature and finds the criterion for evaluation from within the canon of Kannada literature. As Professor and Head of the department of Kannada in Bangalore University he was instrumental in shaping the course of Kannada studies. He is also the Chief Editor of the History of Kannada Literature in 6 volumes published by Bangalore University, and 10 volumes of History Kannada Literature for the Common Man and 14 volumes of Kannada Literary Yearly. He is the receipient of the prestigious Pampa Prashasthi in 1998, an award instituted by the Government of Karnataka in the name of the First Kannada Poet Pampa who lived in 941AD. He is also honoured with Rajyotsava Award (1984), Sahitya Akademi Award (1984), Soviet Land Nehru Award (1973) and was elected President of All India 61st National Kannada Sahitya Sammelan at Davangere in 1992.

Speaking about his development as a poet G.S. Sivarudrappa says-"I began to write poetry during my high school days. My first collection was published in 1951. I

began to publish in what may be termed now as a period of transition. During that period, poetry, in its metrical forms, themes and attitudes was undergoing a sea change. But my sensibility was essentially that of *Navodaya*. It was shaped by the great *Navodaya* poets and also the English Romantic poets." Early 1950's was indeed a period of transition in Kannada poetry. The *Navodaya* mode of writing was challenged by the poets and literary modernism was creating a big impact on Kannada poetry. But the curious fact is that Sivarudrappa, in his own words, "did not follow the beaten track of *Navodaya* nor did submit completely to the *Navya* mode of writing." In fact Sivarudrappa has been a traveller along all the movements of modern Kannada poetry and yet has retained the uniqueness of his poetic personality. "Some call this *Samanvaya* (Compromise) but I don't think that is a proper description. It is a question of assimilating different things from different schools of poetry. All through I have attempted to grow on my own and develop my poetic personality. I do not belong to any one poetic movement, but I have received so much from every movement. I have no prejudices against any of the literary movements. But I do have prejudices against the extreme propositions of each of these movements." Perhaps his rejection of extremities is responsible for his popularity as a poet.

Sivarudrappa's poems deal with ordinary day-to-day happenings of life. He likes to respond freely to his environment. It is as if little things of life create a vibration and through that vibration the poet seems to understand life around him. Trauma of urbanization is a recurring theme of his earlier poems. Coming from a rather poor family in rural Karnataka Sivarudrappa attempts to capture his own experiences of attempting to adjust with ways of life in a big city. "The feeling that man is at a loss, unable to know what he is, and is incompetent to develop his personality, is echoed in most of my early poems like *Mumbai Horoscope*." Man drifting away from Nature forms another important theme in his poems. This leads him on to examine

the concepts of time and history. Much of his later poems are musings on the meaning of history and the enigma of Time. Sivarudrappa makes use of the metaphors of darkness and light and the recurrence of seasons to explore his major themes. In his later poems there is an unmistakable streak of sadness on the fate of man's inability to move along the path of light. Sivarudrappa's poems also contain his spiritual yearning. Spirituality of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and the philosophy of monism are the other two important aspects of his poetic output. The fact that Sivarudrappa was the student of Kuvempu, the literary giant of Modern Kannada was responsible for these aspects of his writing. Search for the beauty of life completes the spectrum of Sivarudrapp's poetry. Indeed he did write a thesis on Aesthetics.

Readers who would like to know more about Sivarudrapp's writing are suggested to refer to an interview of the poet with the editor of this volume published in Indian Literature (Vol.III No.5) from which all the quotations in this note are extracted.

The present anthology of translations of G.S. Sivarudrappa's poems attempts to present the readers the range of his poetry. I thank the poet for his kind cooperation and Sahitya Akademi for entrusting the job of preparing this anthology. In particular I must thank Sri Agrahara Krishnamurthy, the Regional Secretary of Sahitya Akademi and the members of Advisory Board for Kannada.

-OLN

# Translator's Note

Poems included in this anthology are selected with a view of representing the range of the poet's major concerns. Poems from *Teertha Vaani* (1960) are not included here, as they were all translations made by Sivarudrappa from Bengali.

This anthology has translations of 77 Kannada poems. Apart from 19 poems all other poems are translated by me. I thank my fellow translators who have been kind enough to give their permission to include their work in this anthology. G.S. Sivarudrappa has gone through all my translations and has suggested suitable changes. H.S. Shivaprakash and H.S. Raghavendra Rao have given invaluable suggestions that have improved the quality of translations.

-OLN

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# Section One

## 1. I Write Because—

I write because—

because
I can't keep quiet
I want to chronicle my actions and reactions
my pains and sensations

I don't want to be still waters
but to flow and become part of everything

I write
to see myself
to make you see
to talk to you

I write
from pain, pleasure, anger, madness
with that ever burning fire

From: *Kadina Kattalalli, 1981*
*Naaneeke Bareyuttene*
Translated by: OLN

## 2. The Poet and the Philosopher

Said the philosopher:
Gold is all dust.
Sang the poet:
Dust is all gold!

Said the philosopher:
Woman is *maya*.
Said the poet:
Woman is beauty
and with her
I can conquer paradise!

Said the philosopher:
Life is nothing.
Proclaimed the poet:
Not nothing, something
I taste through life after life,
how blessed!

*From: Kartika, 1961*
*Kavi-Vedanthi*
Translated by: OLN

## 3. The Naked

We have gone on clothing darkness with layers and
layers of light
but in the end,
mere darkness—
the nakedness that can never be covered
with any length of cloth.
Who can ever dress with light
this dark nakedness?

For centuries,
I have been dressing up with words
nakednesses jumping out of myself.
Everytime I dress them with words
they look different.
Still,
who can ever find dresses
for all these nakednesses
that go on appearing endlessly.

*From: Gode, 1972*
*Beththale*
Translated by OLN

# 4. The Birth of Poetry

The shyness that never was
while a shapeless rock—
why does it appear
once the rock lends itself
to be sculpted
into a standing nude?

The fragrance that never was
when, bodiless, the seed slept inside the dust
amidst the stink of garbage heap—
from where does it appear
after the seed slowly rises into a plant
and springs up into a flower?

The disincarnate feeling writhing baffled in silence
amidst restless probing—
because of whom does it shine like a pearl
in the casket of words and meanings?

From: *Chakragati*, 1992
*Kaavyodhaya*
Translated by OLN

## 5. The Event

I sat, waiting for the poem,
in the formless silence.
Not a patch of cloud in the sky.
Even when you looked searchingly
Dimness was all round.

In the midst of unfeeling void
a bare tree
like an insignificant orphan
had stretched its branching hands.

As I was waiting all alone for the poem
a dark crow flew in from somewhere
soundlessly—
like vagueness with a pair of wings.

From among the oblique expressions
of the tangled bough-map
it began to kaw,
making the whole tree
an image of the poem I was waiting for.

The problem now is:
who or what was waiting till now—
the tree? the crow?
me? or that moment?
or was it the scheme of meanings
setting up kinships between things?

From: *Chakragati, 1992*
*Sambhava*
Translated by OLN

# 6. From Dream to Reality

"The moon-spider was weaving a web with the threads
of moon light"
What line is this? Where did it come from, why? Where
are the other lines?
What ray of feeling has swam across the expanse of
darkness
and reached here, groping, leaving behind its links?

"The moon-spider was weaving a web with the threads
of moon light
as the stars sparkled, like the drops of dew, on the web."
Look! There comes another line, from a different direction.
It is the memory of a face that was together for some-
time and then separated.
The two were together for a summer night, and
the next morning the whole body was bright, the steps
contained a spring.

"The moon-spider was weaving a web with the threads
of moon light
as the stars sparkled, like the drops of dew, on the web
under the trees lines of shadows written with doubtful
magic."
Lived together for a year and obtained a flower of a child.
Here, the beauty spreads, increases and embraces itself.
The seed that has fallen to the earth sprouts, holds up an
ear of golden corns.
Accept it. Have I now returned the love that you have
given me?
"The moon-spider was weaving a web with the threads
of moon light
as the stars sparkled, here and there like the drops of
dew, on the web
under the trees lines of shadows written with doubtful
magic"

for what does it lay in wait with all this enchantment?"
What loom is this! Who is the weaver and where is the shuttle!
It is the siege of beauty on the banks of the reality from the world of dreams.
Each day the boats come and shelter here under the shade of coconut trees.
What do they hold, how do they come and how many— only questions!

From: *Kartika, 1961*
*Kanasinindha Nanasige*
Translated by OLN

# 7. Imagination and Scholarship

King Rituparna laughed
when he saw the skeleton like horses.
Nala,
who was maimed by the poison of *Karkotaka*,
was the charioteer.

Do we reach *Nisadha* in time,
tomorrow morning for the Swayamwara?
A smile loitered in the eyes of imagination
as an answer to the question.

The chariot moved piercing the path of thin air.
The king nodded his head in astonishment.
I appreciate you, Bahuka; You know well
the heart of the horses. I too am an expert
in something else. If you want to know
I'll tell you how many leaves are there
in that tree below with a thousand branches.

The chariot descended from the sky to the earth.
In half a second, the king Rituparna counted the leaves—
eighty million and four hundred and ninety.
The tree seemed to smile!

Bahuka appreciated
The scholarship of Rituparna.
Silently, once again
The chariot climbed up to the sky
as if the horses had gained wings.

*From: Preeti Illada Mele, 1987*
*Prathibhe-Paanditya*
Translated by OLN

## 8. Come to My Heart

Words stumbling and groping
in the dark alleys,
sparks getting soaked
under the stream of tears
I'll make you breathe
and give you names,
come to my heart.

Drops of water floating
on the blue sky without a body,
voices wandering silently
in the tongue-less silence
I'll make you breathe
and give you names,
come to my heart.

Sprouts withering away
in the waste lands,
tender shoots trampled
under the feet of scorching sun,
I'll make you breathe
and give you names,
come to my heart.

Unmoving melodies caught
in the un-tuned instruments,
kids of golden dreams
that have lost their wings in the storm,
I'll make you breathe
and give you names,
come to my heart.

From: *Preeti Illada Mele*, 1987
*Banni Nanna Hridhayake*
Translated by OLN

# 9. A Soliloquy

Nowadays if I try to write something
nothing comes to my mind, nothing!
The fountain in the yard of my house
is filled with mud and clear water never springs.
a few old memories somehow
just manage to ooze out of the mud.

In the past I wrote a lot:
every day the clouds gathered and rained.
the birds visited the trees
around my house and twittered wrapping
themselves in dreams.

Now, there is no sound.
now, there are no leaves in trees,
the field is full of stubs.

What if I do not write?
Stray cattle wander freely in the fields.
as I gather all that I wrote and sift
I find there is more husk than grains.
I can't help laughing wryly
at the brainless throats that go on singing them
in the same old tunes thoughtlessly.

Somehow the first one had appeared.
and then the herd followed one another—
one after another, hiding one's head
in another's behind.
I have sheared the wool,
made a blanket,
wrapped my self,
and sat watching the herd graze on.

*From: Kadina Kattalalli, 1981*
*Svagatha*
Translated by OLN

## 10. An Old Song

What if the song is old,
the feeling is ever new.
Language is but an instrument
to express the feelings of the heart.

I listen to the old song
again and again and feel full-filled.
From the old song
I'll remake a life that's new.

I've a heart that
that listens to the song with love.
That's enough. Please sing,
I'll enjoy your song.

I've neither pride nor prejudice,
please do sing.
My heart is opened, and
my mind waits to become one with the song.

From: *Samagana, 1951*
*Haleya Haadu*
Translated by OLN

## 11. My Words

Those around me
and those who are near to me
do not listen to my words.
Even if they listen, they don't understand.
Even if they understand
what they understand is not what I said!
So, how can the others
understand if I say anything?

From: *Kadina Kattalalli, 1981*
*Nanna Maathu*
Translated by OLN

## 12. I

I am a centre of darkness.
From this centre
some moon that I haven't seen
broadcasts the song of light.

The song at once becomes a torch
and lights the path ahead for the faltering feet—
thus the song has received praise
from many others.

But I have no light,
I'm just a centre for broadcasting.
Through me the Moon
that I've not seen
flings the rays of a song.
In all enclosing darkness
I've often heard its echo!

From: *Gode, 1972*
*Naanu*
Translated by OLN

## 13. Satisfaction

That day I sang with all my heart
and you listened to it with the whole of your mind.
If I sing today you'll listen again. That's enough for me.
Does a singing bird need a reward, a laurel?

I donot sing so that every one should listen.
It is inevitable that I should sing.
I know there are listeners
that's why I sing and donot bother if any others
close their ears.

From: *Samagana, 1961*
*Tripthi*
Translated by OLN

# 14. The Poet and the Poem

The poet grows old,
but the poems never do.
Even when the toothless poet's back is bent
and as he sits huddled in a corner coughing
wrapping the evening sky round him
there is no trace of tiredness on the face of the poem!

The poem, smiling, plays around the poet
holding the other people's hands
and renews itself like a tree in spring
and becomes the fountain of music
in the throats of the wandering birds.

The poem haunts the critics
as they go up or down in their scales
but escapes like a fast-footed deer.
The poem grows in mature minds
with its multiple meanings.
Like an angel it spreads wings
And fly in the endless space.

From: *Vyakta Madhya, 1999*
*Kavi maththu Kavithe*
Tranlsated by OLN

# 15. The Poem Appeared, like this

1

In the lanes of my memory
our village potter's wheel turns yet.
At the centre of the wheel
a lump of earth awaits the touch

of potter *Gunda's* finger
to waken up the forms that sleep within.
It was an endless wonder. And I saw
the poem takes its birth like this.

2

In the growing darkness of my memory
the sound of the loom resounds yet.
As the shuttle shunts in and out
of the colourful threads, look *Gangamma's* hands

create lustrous little fish on the
texture of the soft cloth with
multiple designs! The magic of
the poem with rhyme and rhythm appeared like this.

3

In the memories of my childhood
the expanse of the coconut trees sparkles yet
like a host of innumerable one-legged birds
waiting to take a flight in the warm morning sun.
Rooting deep in this earth

and blossoming suddenly in this known centre
each coconut tree that connects the land and the sky
is a living poem, for me!

From: *Vyakta Madhya,* 1999
*Kavithe Kamdadhdhu Hige*
Translated by OLN

## 16. I Write

I write about
the voices that
knock at the door in the middle of the night.

I write about
the boat that
sways on the waves of the sea in the tempest.

I write about
the sighing of the bones
that sleep deep down the earth.

I write about
the bright days that
melt away into the evening darkness.

I write about
the seeds of light that
sprout breaking the darkness of ages.

I write about
those people that
squabble about fame, standing on endless roads,

and about
the dreams that blossom,
the wheels that roll,
and I write about myself
and how I become bare as leaf after leaf falls from me.

From: *Chakra Gathi, 1992.*
*Naanu Bareyuththeene*
Translated by OLN

# Section Two

# 17. Call of the Earth

Stop dear clouds awhile
and sprinkle a few drops.
Parched, I have waited for long
singed by the sun's rays.

Green has dried up, breath is bated
and yet, you have no mercy.
My heart throbs with agony
I prostrate to you and surrender.

Can you ever understand how painful
the flames blaze within?
Can they ever draw you down
as you float in the sky?

I have a tongue and can shout
about the love in your heart
and my heart overflows with happiness
when your grace makes the green blossom.

O Come, Come, O Come, Come
bring solace to my heart and declare that
giving relief to the aching heart
is the greatest worship.

From: *Samagana,* 1951
*Neladha Kare*
Translated by OLN

## 18. Trees

These are not trees—
spreading their wings,
the birds ever ready to take a flight.
These coconut trees!

Trees that stand firm and
spread their branches wide
are the frozen currents of green
that is rushing from the earth to the heaven!

These trees, these creepers—
the fountains
that always spring up from the earth.

But, we
always stand fast on this earth
and live bound only to the earth.
Yet, some times,
we too have dreams of the sky!

From: *Chakragati*, 1992
*Naavu Maththu Maragalu*
Translated by OLN

## 19. An Evening

Look, there comes the leopard—
pressing its paws to the neck of the evening
and sucking blood
it lies as the dark patches on its skin shine.
Trees, plants, houses and buildings
crouch silently like a defeated dog.
A train whistles in the distance—the shriek of a jackal.
The landscape shudders.

From: *Thereda Dari,* 1966
*Omdhu Samje*
Translated by OLN

## 20. To the Moon

O Moon, you are a worn out, counterfeit coin.
All your glory found in the myths
all your greatness of sixteen aspects
are no longer valid
once the truth is out
that you are just a breathless, lifeless, barren expanse.

No poet can ever be safe hereafter
comparing the face of his ladylove to yours.
It is doubtful if the kids of future
ever call you Uncle Moon.

We only saw the deer in you
but now, when the devotees see
the American's foot mark on your cheeks,
they are sure to drag you down from the locks of Shiva.
The priests will certainly exclude you when they worship the nine planets.

Yet, my regards for you have doubled.
Firstly, these facts do not affect the happiness
that you give to our parched hearts with moonshine.
Secondly, you have made us realize
this our own earth is much more beautiful
than your place.

From: *Gode,* 1972
*Chamdhranige*
Translated by OLN

## 21. Magha Jina

Everything was pulled out by its root first;
The sum of all the withered leaves fell at his feet.
All round rose the ant hill of silence.

Then he drained the sap
Of bows and twigs and made them dry
The stalk was freed from all grip
And the heart muted for all throbs.

The sky overhead is cleared
Like the blue main sans emotions and ripples
The night sky is a cobra that has raised its hood of gems.

The light spreading its radiance in the morning and evening
Is but silver and golden smoke
Around the nude, silent, meditating form of the Jina

From: *Kartika,* 1961
*Magha Jina*
Translated by K.S. Radhakrishna

## 22. Summer's Façade

Lifting the face filled with pain, spreading its bare boughs
the tree offered its prayer to the cloudless sky;
and yet, the response was from deep down the earth!
Quickly climbing up the roots, rushing through the stem
and springing up in the limbs of branches and shooting
out—the bliss!

As far as you could see, the earth-skin is wrinkled;
the cheeks of all the ponds have withered, here and there
little pot-hole-eyelids scaled with weeds. Now and then
in the bare field, roaming of whirlwinds clothed in dry
leaves.
The wheel-cart of days and nights moving arduously under
the
whiplash of searing sun. The sun a burning eye in an
unsympathetic blue sky.
In-between the blazing sky and burning earth
the smiles have gone to sleep on the beds of trees.

From: *Thereda Dhaari*, 1966
*Chairta Mukha*
Translated by OLN

## 23. Under the Trees by the Avenue

There is no shade under the trees by the avenue.
One must wait for the new shades to blossom.
The fresh blood of spring must flow
and fill each and every vein in these trees.

A new faith must be woven in these
bare branches that have now revealed the secret of the nests.
The fallen leaves gathered on the ground
must be swept away along with the old memories.

Everything that was had was taken away.
Now one must wait for that hand of grace
which never gives without snatching away.
One must stand and wait for the design of the Master-Miser to work.

*From: Kadina Kattalalli 1982*
*Saalu Maragala Kelage*
Translated by OLN

## 24. Once in a Year

Some one some where put on the switch
and at once, here, in the naked field
in every tree burns the crazy yellow of flowers.
Or it is like the flame of colors lighted up
in the scorching middle of the day.

Under this cool fire
young boys and girls
warm themselves up
as they whisper sweet nothings.
They do not know—
within a few days
the colors fade away
and the trees become bare
and these zestful leaves
turn grey, whither and fall
turn to mud and flow away
with the downpour of the rains.

They may know it or not—
once in a year
these trees light up
as if some one, some where
has put on a switch

From: *Preeti Illadamele* 1967
*Varshakkomme*
Translated by OLN

# 25. Questions of Yugaadhi

As the wheel with sixty spokes turn and turn
where is the beginning and where is the ending?
For namesake we call it *yugadhi,* the beginning of an epoch.
Which new epoch has begun today?
Which old one has ended?

The earth turns and turns around the sun
and the sun turns and turns around his centre
the stars roll on and on their own rails
the ocean grinds on and on the shore
the rivers move on and on to the ocean, to the sky, to
the hills, to the fields and the ocean.
What is the beginning, what is the ending in this eternal
rotation?

The seed fallen on the earth leaps up
to the branches, to the buds, to the flowers
couples with the seasons, creates designs under the tree
as the fallen seeds smile and laugh and create a hundred
pictures for the spring.
And what is the beginning and what is the ending in this
rotation?

Me, my father, his great grand father,
son, grandson, great grandson, great great grandson,
in this great rotation of being born and dying
in this rotation of waking up every day to the light
and yet returning and falling in to the night
in the middle of this *bhava,* as I stand in *prabhava*
What is my beginning and which is my end?

From: *Preeti Illadamele* 1987
*Yugaadhiya Prashnegalu*
Translated by OLN

## 26. Some Questions

Have you seen the golden yellow butterflies
playing on the green grass?
Oh, you haven't?
    Then, perhaps, you do not know what happiness is,
    what beauty is,
    or that there could be tears
    in between!

Have you seen the gaiety of a calf
sucking at the cow's udder?
Oh, you haven't?
    Then, perhaps, you do not know what liveliness is,
    what loveliness is,
    or that there could be cruelty
    in between!

Have you seen the rain
pouring incessantly?
Oh, you haven't?
    Then, perhaps, you do not know
    what love is,
    what separation is
    or that there could be hatered
    in between!

Have you seen the expanse of
clear blue sky?
Oh, you haven't?
    Then, perhaps, you do not know
    what silence is
    what a mystery is
    or, that there could be wonder
    in between!

From: *Chakragati,* 1992
*Kelavu Prashnegalu*
Translated by OLN

## 27. Memories of the Himalayas

Ranges of mountain peaks that suddenly appear in dreams
appearing in the mind and always calling
the steps walking towards the original form
in the innermost world of mountains-

the essence of eternal element of water
for ever rotating in the tangled web of Shiva's hairs,
cupola of temples that raise their heads
in the background of shining white mountains-

the breed of a most ancient monster
body covered with thick hairs of huge trees,
the solid silence sleeping at the bottom
of the *paathaala* of yawning *Bhairava*-

vast and huge, confounding
visual expressions of disorderly indifference
that turn to gold in the morning, silver at noon
and golden purple and dove-gray at evening
the divine light-bodies of gods of all directions-

sky that performs an *aarati* of stars to the peak
that stands like old memories descending into forgetfulness
in the dusky darkness,
the dim expanse of hill ranges
that emerge like glacier-dreams in the ocean of sleep-

the echo of rushing waters like
the churning-stick immersed into the secrets of valleys,
the uproar of streams that have suddenly met
in the crooked and puzzling paths deep down the valleys,
the wild enthused songs of innumerable rapids
from the hilltops-
the marvels that silently keep summoning me
in my sleep and waking states

that keep on revealing themselves in my memory,
volumes that are printed in my consciousness,
you are real, out there
and here, within my own self.

From: *Preeti Illada Mele,* 1987
*Himaalayadha Smriti Samputa*
Translated by OLN

# Section Three

# 28. The Search

I searched everywhere for the non-existent God,
in the temples of stone and in the temples of mud.
I was unable to recognize the friendship and love,
that exist within each of us, in you and in me.

Where is the paradise and where is the prison?
Everything is within us, within you and within me.
If the clarity within is not cluttered
the tongue surely would have a taste of the nectar.

So near we are, but we stand apart,
each a prisoner in one's own ego's fort.
How difficult it is to achieve togetherness
in this our life of just a few days!

From: *Gode,* 1972
*Anveeshane*
Translated by OLN

## 29. Ardour

You're the sky, and I'm the earth.
Your love is my strength.
As we both couple,
look, how the green flourishes in bliss!

You'll pull me, and I'll yield.
I'll call, and you'll pour and respond.
Our bliss in our love has made
the worlds fill with bright moonlight!
As I lift my still lips of mountains
you press them with rain-kiss.
Only because of you
I'll open my eyes of energy!

You'll make the sun, the moon and the stars
open their eyes and pour the colors.
This earth is made green, filled with flowers,
and beauty is created!
You're the man, and I woman.
You're the lashes and I the eyes.
And from our union
the life is made fruitful.

From: *Deva Shilpa*, 1956
*Pranaya*
Translated by OLN

## 30. When there is no Love

When there is no love—
How can the flowers blossom?
How can the clouds gather?
How can the raindrops
reach the earth and make it green?

When there is no love—
How do the words connect?
How does meaning take shape?
If the words are just joined with words?
do you call it a poem

When there is no love—
How can light appear in the darkness of South Africa?
How could the dream that now withers behind the bar blossom?
How could the dark heart of the whites
could understand the mercy of Christ?

When there is no love—
How could the raging battle along the borders of doubt end?
How could the suffering within the bounds of
caste, creed, language, and colour come to an end?
How could we prevent our minds
from becoming a desert?

From: *Preethi Illadha Mele,* 1987
*Preethi Illadha Mele*
Translated by OLN

# 31. The Revolutionary

Lo, yonder comes a storm
in a little form!
Raids sweeping in and out;
nothing remains where it should
at home
under him.
Mischief seems able to walk
when he could stalk.

Look at his cheeks, two plumpy oranges!
The little one of lightning-smiles.
The Rebel
You know how able—
fills lovely moonlight
in his twinkling eyes
and pours it straight
on our yard, how nice!
Wakes with him the entire house,
falls if he sleeps, into dull repose.

'Sweet they say, the lute and lyre
to hear,
those perhaps, who deign listen
nor voice nor prattle of children'
says a poet.
How true
as this our child's prattle prove!

What he speaks, what meaning?
He only knows!
You can never make out, as you can't
the modern verse!
The pet of the uncle Moon;
a chum of the puppy and pussy;
the laws and the policy

he has his own;
past all mortal understanding
holds high the light of the heaven.

The reputed works of learned men
he licks and tastes,
feels drab and dry and tasteless fun,
he tears and throws.

The whole of cot feels busy and gay
with him to play
under love's ruling;
his one smile enough, so sweet and fresh
that gently draws aside the cloak of ages
and we live again in the childhood days.

But who could forbear
when he looses his temper,
One, wild and unruly
the little god of fury?
Yet when he smiles (not rare)
his delight compels all to share.
Never trust him the treasure of your heart.
He is a plunderer!

A bridge of love between her and me
this great enchanter
who hath bound two hearts
with mysterious fibre.

From *Cheluvu-Olavu*, 1953
*Kranthikaara*
Translated by K.B. Prabhuprasad

# 32. In the New House

A new house on the outskirts of the city, where
the visitors appreciate the scenery. Nearby
a magnet-coloured hill; on one side,
in a valley the coconut grove welding its sword like leaves.
Towards the left of the house
a pond with its shimmering water. In the evening
couple-coloured clouds floating in the sky. At nights,
"Oh, look at the bright moonlight!"

The visitor's appreciation is a cause for
celebration, for a few days. Then,
pitch dark nights without any sounds;
smiles of very distant lights seen through the window;
heart beats fast as the sound of a falling leaf
explodes in utter silence; she perspires
gazing at the hands of the wall-clock;
if her husband is late by a few minutes
her heart begins to pound. Memories of
the congested house at the centre of the town
begins to sweetly haunt her. No joy
in this newly-constructed-lonely-own-house.
Till new houses spring up
in the vacant sites all around
and the sound of the neighbours talking
fill her ears, this new house
is nothing but hell, for her.

From: *Preethi Illadha Mele, 1987*
*Hosa Maneyalli*
Translated by OLN

# 33. Between you and me

Between you and me are always present
ceaseless rain and howling wind,
scorching sun and burning couch,
falling leaves and blazing pyres,
shadows of vultures and barking hounds.

Between us they register their presence everyday,
the experts of funeral rites.
If they find even a smal mistake, they will blow it up
to wipe us out or roast us alive.

If we stand up, the world licks our feet
but if we fall it tramples us into a bloody mess.
He who rises climbs the throne and rules,
the quiet one is simply dubbed an ass.
What else can remain except the trumpet for the victorious?

It is procession of these people and their commotion
that lasts between us. I am sick of these gods
who wait to bless us if we prostrate. Come let us go
to a distant shore where the lamps of the festival
burn quietly without a blinding glare.

From *Gode*, 1972
*Nanna Ninna Naduve*
Translated by Sumatheendra Nadig

# 34. In Dismal Darkness

Memories in this dismal darkness—
clucking of Paleolithic lizards.
A hundred images
of magnified fears
swimming in
this ocean of gloom.

A hundred worries—
huge boulders exposed to the sun
in some distant island
where man has never trod.

Strings of countless feelings—
demonic alphabets that wind has
scratched on the empty
vastness of 'deserts.
All values—
scattered withered leaves,
coins out of circulation.

Is this sleep, or death, or
the dawn of a new birth?
Everything is unfamiliar, new, ambiguous.

This is a dense forest, wild, without light.
If your smiles breeze here
leaves will vibrate and a ray of bliss
will descend and bring to my mind
a rush of some memory of a distant, past life.

From: *Teredha Dhari,* 1966
*Kaggathalinalli*
Translated by OLN

# Section Four

## 35. My Pocket

Do not put your hand into my pocket,
Brother. It is mine and no one else
Should meddle with it. There may be
Many things in it. It is not your concern.

My bank book, my debt account, my love letters,
It could be anything. But it is mine.
You cannot sort out my troubles. Let them
Be. Give me just your friendship.

No, do not worry about the contents
Of my pocket. I do not worry about yours.
Let the sky between us be clear
Of clouds. That is sufficient.

From: *Kadina Kaththalalli,*
*Nanna Jebu 1981*
Translated by G.S. Amur

## 36. This Man

His cauldrons seethe.
In the nest of the heart
they tick:
a wreckage of clocks.

A hundred bogeys
shuttle night and day
upon these rails.

These are the noises; and then
the silence.

Light and dark goad him
as they run.
The embered east, and night
as she unfurls her parasol
of million holes, and that flood
of sighs we call the wind,
all these run over him
without pity, without end.

Circuses, movies, restaurants,
acrobatic shows,
cigarettes, cards, snake-charming
feats, poetry circles, and the high-falutin
of endless talks,
all that feast of myth and legend:
these, and such as these,
are placebos for his pain.

From the cracks in his ceiling
stream the rains, the thoughts,
and muddy the floors. But
green are the shoots of desire.
Still, despair

does not drown him,
he does not curse his gods,
but bears like a patient pole
a light upon his head.
His silence, a fire, keeps a vigil
in corruption's wakes and fairs...

From: *Dheepadha Hejje,* 1959
*Ivanu*
Translated by A.K. Ramanujan

## 37. Sunday

Today is Sunday;
the ever running stream stops anon
into a shining lake;
that the trees and plants of my zone
get reflected in it
is some consolation.

There is no such hurry;
the sweet sleep of the early hours of the morning
may get an extension;
the bristling beard
can wait a little longer
for a shave.

At least for one day
I can be free from the botheration of
the bustle and the hustling steps;
the growing queue— tails;
the grinding wheels;
the phone calls and office files.

Lying where I am
I can be entirely myself.
This 'I'
need not wait for the train
in the waiting room
with a ticket in my pocket for the next world;
I need not bribe any god
for my elevation.
I have used these common roads
as best I could wearing out my wheels.
So today for once
I will just lubricate these wheels.
How fine it is outside this window!
the gossamer cloud floating in the blue above

and with its bristled head
a lonely tree on a lonely hill beneath;
everything seems to have taken a holiday.

Have the saints and sages
just eternized moments
of a Sunday like this?

In fact
this moment
I am more such saint
Or little less
than the Enlightened

From: *Gode, 1972*
*Bhaanuvaara*
Translated by K.B. Prabhuprasad

## 38. Modest Hope

When I say I don't like to hide anything
don't think that I will stand naked.
I dislike those who insult the life of a common man
with tall-talk.

I am not used to change
the size and shape of my head
to fit the dangling crowns.

My share of the earth I will plough
to sow seeds and water them,
to open the eyes of sleeping seeds.

I don't dream that all seeds
will sprout and grow into gigantic trees
to provide shelter to thousands:
but I have the modest hope to see
at least one or two of them grow
and yield full of healthy seeds.

From: *Gode*, 1972
***Niluvu***
Translated by: Sumatheendra Nadig

## 39. Paradise

No, I do not have any desire
of that paradise,
to tell you the truth,
it must be set on fire.

According to our mythology
there is no hunger
no thirst;
life is not life
if there is no hunger or thirst.

In that paradise above,
gods do not beat their eyelids,
and it is not pleasant
to look at some one
who always have their eyes open.

In that paradise filled with those
who have no wants, there is no dearth for jealousy.
Myths tell us of the games *Devendra* played,
the one who was always insecure of his throne,
the games he played using the *apsaras*, foully.

Tell me, can any one take a swim
in stagnant waters?
The steps on the bathing ghats
of rivers that flow in between hills and the sea,
rivers that dry up in summer
and rise in flood during mansoon,
they are just enough for us.

From: *Preethi Illada Mele*, 1967
*Svargakke*
Translated by OLN



# Section Five

# 40. The Line

In the silence of the graveyards
I stand—alone.
Leaves from the trees around
fall every now and then
as the wind blows.

There they sleep
that walked on this earth
just yesterday or many years before the last—
they breathed
had a name
were friends and companions
fought with their times
they are silent now
fast asleep
melted and imbibed into the earth—
having become
the green leaves in the trees around
flowers in the plants
song in the tongue of the birds
green grass on the ground
or even a stone
or so many other things
utterly unrecognizable.

Amidst all this
I am alone.
A form that breathes
seeing all this
thinking the meaning of all this
trying to discern the line that
separates those who are within
from those who are without.

From: *Kaadina Kaththalalli, 1967*
*Gere*
Translated by OLN

## 41. To the Son of My Great Grandson

You, whom I cannot imagine, stand at one end
I, whom you cannot imagine, stand at this other end.
And, between us the roar of the black waves.

Perhaps one day you'll step on the same ground
that I had walked. As you follow your father
you may suddenly stop and ask him
the history of your grand fathers.

Poor fellow, your father may lose words and stammer.
"I don't know son. They came here from somewhere,
my grandfather told me thus.
I was still a little boy then.
Of course, I didn't ask for the details."

"Haven't you seen the old cupboard in the house?
That was your grandfather's. And the old gun,
that was his father's. They say that he was a lord."
Your father may say like this and try to make you believe.

As you walk, talking thus, under the evening sky
the earth and the sky smile and whisper among themselves.
The wind blows gently and the clouds scatter.
The evening train filled with goods keep on crawl in the distance.

Do you stop at the end of the night-valley
to listen the murmur of the river that flows in the ravine
and give out a sigh? I really don't know what you would do.
My heart aches to decide which memories to leave here
for you.

From: *Anavarana, 1963*
*Nanna Maarimagana Maganige*
Translated by OLN

## 42. The Fifth Act of Shakunthala

Having walked all along the path of fire, the
path of doubts,
at last having crossed the main gate of the palace
the newly wed bride has come to the court
and each familiar face there has become a
sneering question mark!

Thorns of surprise and awe prick her companions.
Uneasiness in the mind of the man who accepted her
and has forgotten her.
Who is she? A question that seems to get no light of
an answer.
Is it a blazing forest fire or the smoke of a *homa*!

The helpless one caresses her own fingers for the
ring and is dismayed.
The bridge is broken, there is no way to cross the chasm.
Can the boat of memory ever help her cross the angry flood?
Laughter echoes all around aiming the shafts of
sneers and sarcasm—
she is a bewildered deer of a girl,
a lamp-stand without light that stands in a corner of a temple,
a pearl cut loose from the necklace.
Is there one who can thread it again?

Where is the answer?
From the capitol to the hermitage of Kanva it is the
night of doubts
a stony, thorny way to home! And yet,
in *Sachiteertha,* among the world of fish
a flash of lightning, within and without!

From: *Kaarthika,* 1961
*Shakunthaladha Aidaneya Amka*
Translated by OLN

# 43. Under the Clock

Who knows since when it is working—
This Clock;
Seconds, minutes, hours—the hands mark
Night and day.
Hourly, half-hourly, rings its moan
While the snow rolls in the veins;

Snow or sunshine (does it matter?)
The stars roll in the blue vault
Undisturbed.
Ceaselessly the river flows to the ocean.
But the dark thirst of the salt waves
Is never slaked
For all the sweetness in the river flows.

The cremation ground is thick with the ashes of burnt lives;
Over a hundred graves the green grass grows!
In the forts and battlements half-ruined
Echoes
The bat's leathery wing;
While underneath,
Excavating the remnants of lost cities,
The archaeologists spades
Ring.

In the dead mid-dark he sat bolt upright;
In the darkness' roar;
And heard
The gnashing of white teeth in the Dark Waters—
Tick, tick, tick,
The wrist watch near the pillow
Shattering his bones.

The dawn-wind and the cock-crow called for a morning walk.
But now the path of bloom and bud is over;
The stark, bare avenue awaits him
With a guard of honour by the skeleton-trees.
He has walked over dead leaves,
The dry leaves,
And now the shadow falls
Of the sixtieth milestone.

Leaving his walking-stick in the corner
He stood before the mirror:
Head stamped with winter, cheeks sunk, eyes dull—
His own portrait!
On the wall is hung his photo
Taken in the gold light of youth.
It is on that the Clock is ticking,
The huge Clock, tick, tick, tick.

It is a great temptation to stand before the mirror
Plucking out the grey hair one by one;
Or better, to dye it black,
And well combed,
Walk the streets in the old suit new pressed.
But the radio blares:
"Think of the Lord, O fool, think of the Lord."

He stumped into the chair engrossed
Shutting out the tick of the clock,
But his little grandchild come lisping
'Grandpa!'
At that sweet sound
The golden dawn light flashed
Brightening the evening skies.

From: *Deepadu Hejje, 1959*
*Gadiyaaradhadiyalli*
Translated by K.S. Yadurajan

## 44. Birthday

I was born with the first big bang
of creation
and since then
I have been a witness!

I was immersed in this *Rasa Dance*
in the sky of countless stars and milky ways;
Once o! once on a fretful day
stars clashed
and a piece flew away!

A fiery globe emerged and turned like a top
That *Linga* of fire burned white hot
on the throne of nothingness!
The universe shook again
frightened of the fiery hair.
Gobbling up aeon after aeon
Nataraja's fire dance blazed.
On the potter's wheel of the burning sea
this world was being shaped.
For the birth of a brand new poem
by the first poet.
Primordial elements churned on
and the fetus of life waited for the most
propitious moment for its release.

Down here stood Bhageeratha
at the feet of the Skyhaired one.
"Descend O Mother descend" he prayed
Om! She came down, the power primordial
And the churning liquid was freed
from the fire of passion;
Birds, beasts, greenery, flowers, fruits,
hills and mountains smiled and nodded their heads
and assumed their proper dimensions.

I came drifting through all the consequences
and blending with all of them.
Whether darkness became light
or light became darkness
the eternal struggle between them began.
The timeless chess-game of
countless births and deaths was inaugurated.
* * *
I came with the first big bang
and since then I have been an eye-witness.

Manu and the Munis, the architects of the human race
found consciousness by churning the depth of Being
*Ekam sat viprah bahudhaa vadanthi.*
The strings of the cosmic veena vibrated.

At once,
Garuda sleeping within rose spreading out
his wings
and with the beat of his wings as broad as the sky
forests and hills, cattle, deer and men
found their freedom.

Hundreds of them, one *avatar* after another—
the acts of creation and destruction
like beads strung together
by the thread of deliverance.

I am carrying all these stories with me
hearing the sighs of arrows sharp.
Today I stand amidst the smoke of gun fire
I have brought Rama and Ravana with me.
* * *

Today is my birthday—
How old am I?
"Counting the number of births I have had
Yama, the Lord of Death, himself smiled."
But still the best wishes rained
on my birth day!

When the calf opened its wondering eyes
the plough was already there on its neck!
Where did she disappear, the *Kamadhenu*
who had promised in my dreams to suckle me?
Wherever I turn, it seems the sky rains fire
and the withered tongue is denied
even a drop of honey.
What if the neck sprains
under the weight of the plough
you have to pull the cart of life.

Today is my birthday.
The best wishes of my friends
adorn my mind like a garland of leaves.
So far so good, but who knows
what the future may bring!

* * *

I came with the creation's big bang
and asked, what next?
Voyaging on my chosen path
at one side on the Belugola hill
I saw Gommata.
On his chest as vast as the sky
I saw a host of stars.
And before the smiling moonlight
I stood like an earthen lamp.

From: *Deepada Hejje,* 1959
*Hutidha Habba*
Translated by Sumatheendra Nadig and P. Srinivasa Rao

## 45. From Dawn to Dusk

Clock chimes six—
celebrations in the labor wards of the east,
golden faced sun emerges from the womb of darkness
bringing with him great joys.

*Joysa* turned the pages of the almanac,
calculated strengths and positions of all the planets,
drew the horoscope and returned home.

Kid-sunshine, crawling, crossed the threshold—
tinkling of bells as the cows milked
darling calf thumping at the udders
cawing crows, chirping sparrows, wagging puppies—
all a flood of endless wonders.

Clock chimes seven—
from Seven to Eight
jasmine— showering— eyes in the skies above
and a soft bed of green sari-grass below
two moon-pots streaming milk into the lip-cups in between.

As it turns eight, look, warm early morning sunshine—
lullaby of birds in the trees around
each branch is alive, stones have turned emeralds!
There, there, the school bell calls
pickup your slate, pick up your book, start.
The 'master' waits there,
repeat A B C D, learn multiplication tables, read lesson
one—
the magic of early morning is gradually gliding away.

From eleven to twelve—
beehives all over the roofs!
Young heifer bumps at whatever it sees
shuttle of days and nights weave moonlight dreams,
develops the habit of straightening your crop of hairs,
looking at your own reflection in perturbed waters,
winds from all the ten directions howl and roar in the heart!

The clock on the tower in the crowded marketplace strikes one—
strikes at the heart of the burning sun.
Enchanting nuptial songs under a green canopy in the distance
a procession of trees, filled with flowers, gone crazy in the spring
a keen desire to latch a swing to each star
and swing to touch the blue-glass-walls of horizons
singing, "Let me be your honey and you mine
Let's become fish blissfully swimming the divine stream."

One, two, three—
The clock went on chiming.
O, when did this hand cross two and reach three?
Hold that hand still, let it move no further,
hold it firm, let it be there for at least some more time.
"What nonsense" the clock chuckled!

Sighs of separated *yaksha* on the cloud-kites of *Asadha-skies.*
Rain-drenched sunshine of *Shravana*
fresh green shoots nodding their heads in the breeze
cloud-babes shout and play in the blue-yard of skies.
The tree is issuing forth its pendant roots
birds are building nests in each and every branch
and singing lullabies

as creepers from here and there circle round the body of
the tree.
Often an uneasy question creeps its head up—
"Where did I come from?"

The clock chimed four—
uneasiness as you play, the last set of tennis.
tiredness as you climb, the steps
the beehive has become empty
cobwebs in the corners
cracks even on the freshly painted walls
sun rain and winds have weathered away the tiles of the
roof
you could feel the drizzle as you sit in the house.
If you do repairs and proper upkeep
the house is good for at least another half a century.

Merciless clock—
the hand crosses four, touches five and keeps on moving.
Warmth of the sun is decreasing, day by day.
Blue of the sky seems to have lost its sheen.
Water seems to have lost its taste.
What times are these?
Pictures of the sweet memories of the early morning
crowd the evening sky.
Eyes stumble in the darkling light of the front yard.
Unknown footsteps on the stairs
listen—
the clock on the wall has struck seven.
Someone is knocking at the front door.
Incesently.
Get up. Open the door. Don't be afraid at the end of it all.

**From: *Deepada Hejje*, 1959**
***Mabbinimdha Mabbige***
**Translated by OLN**

## 46. The Setting

The evening sun on a slow descent
Towards the western ocean resembled
The Sudarsana disc. The untiring spread
Of wavy water shone like the Serpent bed.

On the edge of the ocean a forest;
By its side a cultivated field; a lone farmer
Ploughing the land; an eagle in full feather
Flying acorss the sky woven in yellow silk.

On the butter clouds the flash of remembered
Thing; the wind playing flute among the branches
Of tall trees; on the silent forest-stage
Resting under the green hood of the Aswattha tree

A smiling figure, legs crossed like peacock feathers.
Is this the moment before creation or the moment
After deluge? A hunter arrives in search of game
Casting his black shadow on the sapphire grass.

In Hari's feet he sees, through the thick bushes,
A bird of great rarity. In a flash he shoots
An arrow straight at the target. Blood
Rushes out of the sharp sting, the blue sky turns red.

The farmer toiling on his land sees the miracle.
The evening sun slips suddenly into the ocean,
As the sound of Panchajanya transforms into light
Covering the expanse of sky and earth.

Filled with wonder, he lifts his plough
And walks away, thinking of the next day,
The job of sowing seeds in the field,
He had ploughed all day long.,

From: *Chakragati*, 1992
*Asthamaana*
Translated by G.S. Amur

# 47. My Lamp

I will light a lamp

not with certainty that I will conquer darkness.
While countless ships of light have drowned
I don't dream that my lamp will lost for ever

I will light a lamp
not with the hope that I will cross over darkness,
because I know for centuries
footsteps have shuffled from darkness to darkness.
Now and then we have struck matches.
We have lighted the torches of Vedas, puranas,
histories, science and poetry.

'Take us from Darkness to Light' has been our prayer
but all that we have seen is a heap of ash.

I also know that this darkness
has unquenchable thirst.
It may wear or wrap or eat or drink only light,
but its craving is enormous.

Still I will light a lamp
not with certainty that I will cross over darkness
but with the hope
that as long as we are here
we may see each others face.
Who knows what we may mean to each other
when the lamp goes out
and darkness rules.

From: *Gode*, 1972
*Nanna Hanathe*
Translated by Sumatheendra Nadig

## 48. Two Faces

When I wandered lonely in a distance
your smile of a honeyed moonlight had beckoned me.
When I somehow manage to come near you
all that I see is the frown of gloomy clouds!
The moonlit face that I saw from a distance,
before I felt the flames of your burning indifference,
was indeed charming
and lovable! I can not understand your duality.
Enough of this indifferent union, please
send me back to the good fortune of separation.
Make me forget that I ever came near you,
I feel it is for ever better to roam in search of your grace!

From: *Kaartika*, 1961
*Eradu Mukha*
Translated by OLN

## 49. Prayer

Please, O please do not disturb
the clear water of the pool with your wild buffalo hoofs,
do not stretch the wings of the eagle
on these silent blue hilltops.

Please, O please do not come like crickets
to circle round the lamps in the sanctorum
do not become cockroaches hiding under mats and seats
sneaking and polluting the offerings for god.

Please, O please do not rush into the fields like bulls
and destroy tender growths of plants,
do not become like rats and bandicoots
gulping the food stored for the morrow.

I am not the Buddha,
I am not the *Siddha* to fight against you
why do you assault me alone?
(Your freedom sets me also free)
Please do grant my prayers.

From: *Kartika, 1961*
*Praarthane*
Translated by OLN

## 50. With and Without Fear

When I was alone, and had none with me,
I walked the world without fear.
Now, I live at home, with my people,
And am full of fear.

Alone I walked, and without fear,
The world of stars and planets.
Now, on this highway, in the midst of
countless vehicles I am full of fear.

Alone I walked, and without aim,
In the blinding light of fire.
Now with the sun about to set
I stumble and am full of fear.

Alone I slept in the sanctum sanctorum
Without fear, and waited for the incarnation.
Now living in history I fear the incarnation
would be maimed, and the idol disfigured.

From: *Preethi Illadamele, 1987*
*Bhaya-Nirbhaya*
Translated by D.A. Shankar

## 51. Plaits

Plaits that dangle like alluring snakes
behind the backs of women
that streams down like *Kalindhi*
and split in two different directions near the neck!
Plait like the sting of a scorpion,
little plaits, short plaits,
golden plaits of little kids!
Plaits tangled, never treated with oil
plaits like knots mixed with sweat and dust!
Plaits of my sisters that I pulled playfully,
plaits filled with the fragrance of jasmine.
Plaits that spread like pendant roots of motherly affection!
Plaits of Panchali that "sucked the life dry of the *Kuru*
clan"!
Plaits that bathed in the tears of Sita!
So many plaits
O is there any end to them!

Dark plaits created by the dispersing light in the evening!
Plaits of light created by disappearing night!
Plaits of cranes and swans that often come flying in lines!
Plaits of flowering creepers that embrace trees!
Plaits of rivers that meander in woods and glades!
Plaits of hill ranges that spread endlessly!
Plaits of green forests that descend like Ganga from
Shiva- like hills
Plaits of midnight decked with twinkling stars!
Plaits of rains from frenzied monsoon clouds!
Plaits of the *Chandrachuda, Vyomakesha!*
Plaits that occupy the whole universe,
Plaits of music, poetry and sculpture—
All is beautiful!

Yet, even to this day
Face of the Mother
On the other side of plaits
Is not seen at all!

From: *Cheluvu Olavu,* 1953
*Jade*
Translated by OLN

## 52. Your Smile

Your smile—
draws *rangoli* on the morning skies
becomes a shaft of light
descends in the midst of dense forests
and plays on the ripples of sleepy lake
makes the buds open their eyes
caresses the birds sleeping in trees' nests
and becomes a golden ornament to the hill top.

Your smile—
makes a harvest of wonders
in the innocent eyes of babes;
fills calves with zest as they thump cows' udders
floats along the babbling of streams
mingles with the sea that breaks against the shores
and plays like a peacock spreading its feathers
in the coconut groves.

Your smile—
becomes a magnet in the cheeks of a young girl
weaving rainbows in the hearts of a young man
spreads a shadow of clouds on the evening faces of the old
and swings over the burning fires in a cremation ground.

Your smile—
draws. images of memory on the evening sky.
burns like little lamps in the houses at dusk
and spreading the net of stars
silently waits.

From: *Kaadina Kaththalalli, 1981*
*Ninna Nagu*
Translated by OLN

## 53. Krishna

In the darkness
a rain-wrought cage!
The Divine tusker swayed
behind the bars of the Evil one!

Red lips nourished on butter
and flutes!
with love,
the gopi's heartbeat galloped!

The Jamuna quickened
for dreams come true,
and Brindavan's bamboo forest
was flute to that breath!

The flute left its song in the air
and made way for the kingdom's glory;
in a Mathura palace,
it nursed the light.

In the smiling boy's
flute-holding finger grew
the thunder of Arjuna's chariot
and in that fluting breath
the conch-shell trumpet of war-

In the bewilderment of war
hear the Lord's own song;
Here I come, I come again
in the age after age of need!

Again, again the darkness
and the rain-wrought cage,
And there! again the Divine tusker's
swaying trunk.

From: *Devashilpa*, 1956
*Krishna Shakthi*
Translated by A.K. Ramanujan

## 54. In the Temple of Jagannatha at Puri

In the wheel-eyes of Jagannatha I saw
spreading splendour of sunflower farms;
crafts of holding together days
and nights in one magnetic centre;

depths of blue ocean stretching
along waves of white sandy shores;
memories of the great Kalinga war
that turned the Daya waters red;

peace of repentance that followed;
moonlike beauty of Ashoka chakra;
silent motion of the chariot-wheels
of the towering Konarka temple;

magic lore embedded in folk memories
of tribals dwelling in deep forests;
mystery of silence before creation;
and the eternal turning of past, present and future.

From: *Chakragati, 1992*
*Puri Jagannathana Dheguladhalli*
Translated by G.S. Amur

# Section Six



## 55. To Sri Kuvempu

I remember you in silence,
the new births I got from you and
the secrets you unraveled.

You taught me to stand upright, head held high
to walk fearlessly unmindful of irritations
and to how to live in silence.

With affection,
how many keys you have given me
how many doors you have opened to
how many unknown states within me
and blessed me with the care of Kannada.

Standing far from the din of trumpets
I remember you in silence
and with respect.
You have embraced me as
star studded sky.
I have hoisted the mast
and am moving in my boat
with the oars that you have given me.

From: *Kadina Kaththalalli*, 1961
*Sri Kuvempu Avarige*
Translated by OLN

## 56. What Current is this?

What current is this
That pants like an angry python?
Flooding away houses and minds
what current is this?

Temples rolling down
old idols floating away
darkness pervading, strings cut
harmony is lost
bridges between hearts are broken
chasms of doubts, fears and anxiety
open their mouths wide

each face seems to put on a mask
among the words that are uttered
mind and heart are not to be seen
what current is this?

From: *Gode*, 1972
*Yaavudi Pravahavu?*
Translated by OLN

## 57. The Wall

Sometime there rises
all of a sudden
a wall
between you and me.

from somewhere comes a brick
and a brick;
piling up layer on layer,
even as we are seated
entombing us within;
Walls from all around
staring in the face with red eyes
and with moustaches red
beneath which
a vile mouth of cynical face
spitting fire!

***

Then,
the garden of roses
watered and tended by you and me
over years
lies scorched and
smoking still;
suffocated, you and me
wriggle in agony
on either side of the wall;
the raging wind howls around the house;
the stygian dark night grips
and growls
gnashing its gleaming stars.
I on this side

of the wall
and you on the other,
still harking
to hear the cock's crow:
we wait and wait
for the wall
to dissolve.

From: *Gode,* 1972
*Gode*
Translated by: K.B. Prabhuprasad

## 58. What Shall I Sing?

What shall I sing?
With what song shall I soothe you?

When the houses are burning all around
when the life is beaten and made silent
when all of us are afloat on the raft of sighs
what shall I sing?

When the hungry suffer caught in the web of words
when exploitation has become a piercing stake
when deception conceives newer conceits
what shall I sing?

When pyres in the eyes burn sweet little dreams
when the volcanoes erupt in each heart
when there is only smog and fog everywhere
what shall I sing?

When the blind journey continues groping
along the lightless roads and among the ruins of temples
losing its way in the raging storm,
what shall I sing?

From: *Preethi Illadhamele* 1987
*Yaava Haada Haadali?*
Translated by OLN

## 59. The Scorched Land

What seed can sprout here,
in this scorched land,
where there is no moisture, no fertility?
Here, where the vulture of a burning sun
always raps at the bald heads of boulders—
here, in this scorched land.

What seed can sprout here on this shore,
where the black briny waves of the sea
sculpt images of fear on the crags?
Here, where the broken pieces of boats
heaps of bone stew under the fiery sun
what seed can sprout on these desolate shores?

What seed can sprout here, where day and night
the impotent winds blow and howl
dust and dried leaves perform a devilish dance?
Here, where not a single flower blossoms with a smile
attracting the bee-kiss, the greenery never embraces
the sprawling hillocks, what seed can sprout here,
on this barren earth!

From: *Theredha Dhari*, 1966
*Bengaadu*
Translated by OLN

## 60. On the Streets without Lights

We have walked and walked on the streets without lights
we are so much used to them.
If you ask, some, say these streets did have dazzling lights.
I think, we too remember it rather vaguely.

As evidence, you can find half a dozen poles without lamps.
Our eyes have accustomed to darkness,
old memories have faded away,
and feel darkness is better than the murky light we may
get from our companions.

From: *Theredha Dhaari*, 1966
*Dheepavilladha Dhaariyalli*
Translated by OLN

## 61. In this Country

In this country,
From top to bottom,
Everything should change.
But the chair bearing me
And the bit of earth beneath
Had better be where they are.

In this country,
Caste, creed and sect,
These have no place.
But seats must be reserved
For us,
The forward class.

In this country,
Hero worship or dynastic rule
Must come to an end.
But the gift of land
To the family god
Must always stand.

In this country,
People should stop talking
And be quiet.
But the words I speak
Must be heard always
And greeted with applause.

From: *Kadina Kaththalalli*, 1981
*I Dheshadhalli*
Translated by G.S. Amur

# 62. Nightmare

I have seen
What is great degenerate.

I have seen one who become *Gommata,* a towering figure,
Dissolve into slush and trickle away.

I have seen *Indras* elephant, *Airavata,* yield
To weakness and wallow like a street cur in ash heaps.

I have seen words that burnt so bright
Turn to mere silent ashes.

I have seen a vile reptile sprouting seven hoods
And sporting in the waters of *Manasa* lake.

I have seen the white fans of *Saraswathi's* shrine
Reduced to brooms in minister's bungalows.

I have seen pious men at anthills, naked
Pouting milk and ghee, worshipping snakes.

I have seen litterateurs out of vindictive spite
Build factious institutions and behave like world teachers.

I have seen petty men in high places
Scurry about like mice and bandicoots.

These seen, I wake up, and this awakening
Feels like a fiercely burning ball of fire.

From: *Kadina Kattalalli,* 1981
***Dhuhsvapna***
Translated by: K. Narasimhamurthy

## 63. Bheema's Lament

One has donned a saari, put bangles on his hands,
and anklets on his feet;
the other has dressed himself in saffron, and sits in a corner;
another has made the cattle shed his home;
yet another lives in the stables.

This woman picks lice from the queen's hairs
and, often pricks us too.

I too am—in this kitchen,
burning with the firewood,
boiling with the cooking food,
and grinding away old memories.

My eyes see again
all that we saw and learnt;
how we escaped from the burning palace,
how we rolled down with the rolling dice,
how we moaned under the shadow of undone plaits,
how we roamed in the forests.

My sighs push ahead the boats of memories—
so many villages and towns,
so many forests, *rishis* and demons,
so many mornings and nights,
so many things roll themselves out
squeezing the life out of me.

There, beyond the boundary of the town,
in the burial ground,
we have made our manliness a corpse
and tied it to a branch of a tree.
All around me I see

useless creatures proclaiming their valour,
rising to the heights that they should never climb,
descending to the depths they ought not to descend,
polluting, defiling, debasing every thing.
I, who should not overstep the limit,
am waiting, burning myself out with the firewood,
am boiling with the rice in the vessel, seething and waiting.

From: *Gode*, 1972
*Bheemaalaapa*
Translated by OLN

## 64. Creatures of News

Some are afraid of being lost.
So they sit in front rows
And grab presidential chairs.
With pleasant faces they narrate
Their losses, shake hands and grin.
Images of politeness,
Objects of daily news.

They live on publicity,
Lose their sleep if none talk about them
Or news papers fail
To report all they say.

They come and knock on your door,
Rush to platform, mikes and applause,
Bending their giraffe-necks
For garlands that may come their way.

Silence makes them rot
In slow suffering.
Fear of oblivion
Fills them with sweat. They cling
To passing things
And with the current float.

From: *Kadina Kattalalli, 1961*
*Sudhdhi Jeevigalu*
Translated by G.S. Amur

## 65. The Guilty

He pinched some dried fish,
and those who swallowed whales
and silently usurped the thrones,
caught him, and brought him to book.

Thousands standing around him with a stone in your hands
tell me, who among you will throw the first stone?
One who has not committed any sin?
Or was not caught even if you had committed one?
Or even if caught somehow escaped?
Tell me, who among you will throw the first stone?

Come, step forward.
You will not live unless you kill one like me.
Unless you kill one like me, you cannot hide
what you have done so far.
This is part of history,
a disease that has no cure.
Yet, remember this—
the next day's dawn
will reveal the murder you committed in the dead of night.
Then, not all the perfumes of Arabia will sweeten your hands,
not all the waters of the multitudinous oceans incarnadine
will clean your guilty hands.

From: *Kadina Kaththalalli*, 1981
*Doshi*
Translated by OLN

## 66. The Wheel Turns

Ekalavya sits staring silently
at his palm without a thumb.
Was he desperate, was it a sacrifice
was it a sense of being fortunate?
All that is poet's imagination.

The mountain stream is flowing still
from the cliff to the distant sea.
The trees still flourish in spring
and become naked in winter.

Even if the leaves fall, it is certain,
the branches will again become green.
But the thumb that is cut off will never grow anew.
How many faces does Exploitation have?
That's the subject of history.

Acharya Dronas will come again and again
to Ekalavyas who sit in silence.
What happens next? You know how the
wheel of history turns, of course.

*From: Chakra Gathi* 1992
*Chakra Gathi*
Translated by OLN

# 67. A Question and an Answer

"Father, why don't you have a thumb
on your right hand?" Out of curiosity
the little child asked one day.
"It was offered to my God, son. That's why

I miss that finger, that's all." "Offered to God?
What kind of God was he to ask for your thumb?
Surely, He must be a very cruel one. Didn't you feel
anything as you gave it away, father?"

"You shouldn't speak like that, son. God, after all, is God."
"True, father, true. God didn't ask for your life
instead of your finger. I must thank Him.
May be, your God is rather a good God."

How shall I tell this child that
I didn't give just my thumb but the whole of me?
Even to this day I haven't understood
how much I gave or how much I retained.

*From: Chakra Gathi* 1992
*Prashne-Uththara*
Translated by OLN

# 68. Lament of a Mother

I had thought that my son
would become a great archer, like his father,
and live happily as the master
of the clan of hunts men. But, look,

The man with a long white beard came
talked with my son for a while
and went away taking with him
the thumb of my son. I don't know

what had come over my son, what
madness had enveloped him. He just smiles.
if I ask him "why my son, why?" he says
"Aren't the remaining fingers enough to hunt

or to fling an arrow?" I am an old woman.
I sit and brood in this growing darkness.
O, how can my children, how can this forest,
confront their enemies in the years to come?

*From: Chakra Gathi,* 1992
*Thaayiya Koragu*
Translated by OLN

## 69. In the Middle of the Night

Acharya Drona sits
in the silent hermitage
in the middle of the night
deeply immersed in thought:
Why did you engage me, O God,
in such an unwise, cruel

and barbaric act! Wandering
in unknown forests why was
I enmeshed thus? Why did I pester
the hunter lad for his thumb as *guru dakshina?*

That lad! Why should he offer at once
the very life of his valour as soon as I asked?
It would have been better if he had rejected.
then perhaps I too would have been blessed.

The wilderness grinds its teeth all around.
He became great by giving, and I, too mean by asking.
Having put my neck in the noose of obligation
asked for the thumb. Did I have any other way out?

**From: *Vyaktamadhya,* 1999**
***Nadu Raathriyalli***
**Translated by OLN**

## 70. Somewhere a Child is Crying

Somewhere a child is crying
endlessly.
Like the cry of a distant storm
like the unceasing showers
like the breaker that strikes against the land
somewhere a child is crying
endlessly.

The moon is a loaf of bread,
unreachable, in the sky-plate.
the stars shine and burn
like sparks of hunger in an empty stomach.
The city lights spread all over
like series of arrogant belching.
the orphan trees tremble in the biting cold
with their had-like bare branches stretched.

Somewhere a child is crying.
endlessly.
A thousand feet stomp over
the listless street
the wheels of routine
roll over the rails
and somehow the household affairs
are being carried on.

Somewhere a child is crying
endlessly.
The cry mingles with
the ringing bells
of temples, monasteries and the churches
and also the cobweb of welfare politics.
It climbs up the sky-scraper-trees
of urban forests.

Somewhere a child is crying
endlessly.
In the lands cultivated
with centuries of sweat and toil
in the endless path of inventions
of poets and scientists and revolutionaries
in the dense smoke of corpses of dreams
burning in the flames of frightened eyes
and in the path of history
filled with neighing of horses
and the rumble of chariots
somewhere a child is crying endlessly.

From: *Preethi Illadhamele*, 1987
*Elloo Magu Aluthaa Idhe*
Translated by OLN

## 71. Please, You Tell me

Ladies and Gentlemen,
tell me please—
they say they are going to build temples.
Then, our gods need have no fear.
Milk will rain from the clouds
honey will flow in streams
our country will soon be
*Rama Rajya.*

But, tell me,
ladies and Gentlemen—
what shall we do with the temples that are starving?
What shall we do with the temples that have no light in their eyes?
What shall we do with the temples that are naked?
What shall we do with the temples that have no opportunity to speak up?
You please tell me.

From: *Chakragathi,* 1992
*Neevee Heeli*
Translated by OLN

## 72. One Little Incident

In the intense noon,
in the dense forest of *Dandaka,*
just two of them were moving—Rama and Lakshmana.
burnt in the fire of separation from Sita,
Rama was thirsty.

No trace of waters anywhere.
They walked and walked,
and, reached a tiny stream.
They stood there,
removed their bows that hung on their shoulders,
and stuck them in the sand.

Washed their faces,
drank water to their fill,
their mind filled with happiness.
Rama returned to pick up his bow
and saw that, in the wet sand, it had pierced
the back of a little frog!

What have I done in my hurry to quench my thirst?
He thought, and said,
"Dear frog,
why did you keep quiet
when my bow pierced your back?"

"O Merciful One," the frog said,
"If some one else had caused me pain
I certainly would have prayed to you for help.
When you yourself have pierced my back
with your bow who shall I call for help?"

From: *Chakragati,* 1992
*Omdhu Samgathi*
Translated by OLN

## 73. Mumbai Horoscope

Place of birth: maternity hospital.
Place of growth: city bus, tram, car, taxi, and local trains.
Food: bottled milk of unseen cattle, gripe syrup, Horlicks etc.,
Sights seen: stand in a queue; walk only on the footpath;
run, don't stop; push them,
pull them, some how move forward; anywhere, no
matter where, root your self deep and suck.
Mother: the one who walked you along the margin of the
road where a thousand
wheels roll. The one who introduced you to the
unknown worlds with in the confines of a little
room.
Father: the creature who had disappeared from morning
until evening and shown
him self on holidays, coughing bitterly.
Education: what the schools and colleges taught; what the
roadside hoarding filled into
the brain; what the Radio Ceylon Commercial
Station recommended. What you learnt by yourself
is very little, except glancing in the sly at the color-
ful girls standing in the bus stop.
Life: move ahead like a pawn on this chessboard of a
million roads; wake up, squeeze
yourself in to your dress and run; catch a bus or
a local train; return home in the evening with a
heavy load of tiredness on your eyes; wake up
your wife who has nodded herself to sleep at
eleven in the night; eat the food that has gone
cold; under the shelter of a rented house sleep like
a worn rail on which a thousand wheels of the
train of dreams run endlessly.

*From: Tehredha Dhaari, 1966*
*Mumbai Jaathaka*
Translated by OLN

# 74. While going by the Bus

In the entire bus
one single jasmine
attracted me!
And behind it
just two green leaves
in the background of the sheen
of dark hair.
Where the plaits diverge
single jasmine in bloom.
Shall I compare it to the moon-light boat
floating in the pond of dark hairs!

It became the pinnacle of the two
divergent plaits that descended and swayed
over the *pallu* coming round the full neck.
It attracted me, and I don't know
if there was a lingering smile over the face
on the other side.

I got down the bus
and the jasmine went away.
Yet, the flower stays in my sight
and its fragrance follows me.

*From: Kartika, 1961*
*Bussinalli*
Translated by OLN

## 75. My Umbrella

This umbrella is mine. Ours is an ancient relationship.
In sun and rain, it is my constant companion.
But more than an umbrella, it is for me a question mark.
I carry it in my hand wherever I go. Without questions,
Life is worthless. I do not care for full stops.
I love to spread the folded doubt and walk in its shade.

A lady's umbrella is a sign of wonder. That is why
It is so cute and colourful. Between the two umbrellas
Life spreads, from question to exclamation. To the female,
The male is a question; to the male, the female
Is a source of wonder. They are a perfect pair.
Is this what their maker planned or are they just there?

From *Anaavarana, 1963*
*Nanna Chatri*
Translated by G.S. Amur

# 76. In a Restaurant

The only business here is eating.
People at different places
may be doing different things.
But here, eating is the only thing.

Faces, dark and eager, waiting
for the waiter.
Others, having gobbled up
what was served, run their tongues
over lips dreaming of what is still to come.

Mouths chew and chomp
gulping everything down.
Slurping barrels with lips
pressed against cups.

Sprawled out on the table
the map of conquered land:
leavings, like ruins, in cups
and plates and yellow grease rims
as hands are washed. Brass tumblers
lined, for drill, smooth glasses
kissed by a thousand lips, and a spoon
that has rolled around a hundred tongues.
They are yours now. Go on, have no qualms.
Surely there's no problem with no self
of your own. Every one here is the same,
an eater. All around, a grazing herd.

What one asked for is on the plate—
yours must be a dish divine.
Come what may, let the train speed on.
With a mile long queue of people waiting
with whips in their eyes to chase you out,
it does not do to eat leisurely as at home.

Here, the bill,
take it.
Pay him his dues
and, get out.

Is everything alright with you?
Make sure.
What is your name?
Take out the visiting card in your pocket
Or, think of the name plate on your door.

From: *Anavarana, 1963*
*Hotelinalli*
Translated by Laxmi Chandrasekhar
and B.C. Ramachandra Sharma

## 77. The Routine

Nests on the branches of the trees
and houses on the lanes
multi-storied buildings fill the city.
As soon as the evening descends
people return to their houses
to continue their family lives.
The sound of wheels become quiet,
the lights, unperturbed, shine brightly,
through out the night.
Beating their wings
and often making nocturnal sounds
the birds wait for the day to break—
at the dawn,
when the egg of the darkness breaks
and light spreads—
wings, legs, and the wheels
begin again to roll routinely.

*From: Gode,* 1972
*Dhainamdhina*
Translated by OLN

# Notes

Brief notes on especially Kannada and mythological references in the poems.

*Aarati:* a little auspicious flame on a platter that is held up to the face of a divine idol, or person on certain auspicious occasions.

*Airavatha:* elephant of India.

*apsaras:* water-nymphs.

*Asadha:* name of a month, known for gusty winds, roughly corresponds to June and July of Christian Calendar.

*Asoka:* the emperror.

*Aswattha:* a sacred tree.

*Avatara:* literally "descent." A God appearing in human or animal form.

*Bahuka:* the assumed name of Nala when he, being deformed, became the charioteer of Rituparna.

*Belugola:* a place in Hassan district, Karnataka, that is famous for the monolithic statue of Gommateswara, Gommata.

*Bhaghiratha:* a mythological king who brought river Ganga to earth from heaven.

*Bhairava:* a ferocious god, a form of Shiva.

*Bhajan:* a devotional song, singing of such songs.

*Bhava, Prabhava:* Names given to years in Hindu calendar.

*Brindavan:* the place where krishna spent his childhood.

*Chandrachuda, Vyomakesha:* names of Shiva, literally. "One decorated with moon" and "one who has the whole sky as his hair."

*Dandaka:* a forest where Rama spent part of his exile.

*Devendhra:* Lord of gods.

*Drona:* Master of archery, a character in the Mahabharata.

*Ekalavya:* leader of a huntsmen, a character in the Mahabharata.

*Ekam st viprah bahudhaa vadanthi:* "truth is one, but the learned ones describe it in many ways."

*Ganganna:* the name of a weaver, which literally means "brother Ganga." This very common name has many association with the holy river Ganga.

*Garuda:* the bird-vehicle of Vishnu.

*Gommata:* Gommateswara, in ,Jainism, another name for Bahubali, one of the two sons of Adinatha, the first tirthankar. He did penance for long years and attained liberation.

*Gunda:* the name of a potter. This name is made memorable by a narrative poem of Harihara, a medieval Kannada poet. Potter Gunda in that poem sees God and makes him dance to the rhythm of his pottery.

*Gurudakshina:* offering made by a disciple to his guru.

*Hari:* a name of Vishnu.

*Homa:* daily fire ritual, done at ashrams and homes.

*Indra:* lord of gods.

*Jagannatha:* Man duty in the temple of puri, in otussa

*Jamuna:* a river, also called Yamuna.

*Jina:* literally "one who has conquered", a Jaina saint.

*Joysa:* a priest.

*Kalindhi:* part of river Jamuna where the snake Kalinga lived.

*Kalinga:* the snake that Krishna subdued.

*Kamadhenu:* Mythical Cor of heaven that fulfils every desire.

*Kanva:* a rishi, foster father of Sakunthala,

*Karkotaka:* a serpent that bit Nala when he saved it from forest fire.

*Kuru:* the name of a clan, the antagonists in the Mahabharata.`

*Kuvempu:* Ku(ppali) Vem(katappa) Pu(ttappa) one of the most important modern

Kannada writers, the first Kannada poet to get Jnanapeetha Award.

*Magha:* Name of a month that belongs to winter.

*Mathura:*

*Maya:* a philosophical term, meaning "illusion."

*Nala:* hero of the story Nalopakhyana, a part of the epic, Mahabharata; King of, Damayanthi's husband.

*Nisadha:* the Kingdom of Damayanthi's father.

*Paathaala:* one of the seven nether worlds in Hindu mythology.

*Pallu:* part of the sari covering the upper part of the body.

*Panchajanya:* name of the Conch of Krishna

*Panchali:* Draupadi, the heroine of the Mahabharata, literally "a woman from the region of Panchala."

*Puri:* an ancient centre of pilgrimage, now in the state of Orissa.

*Rangoli:* artistic patterns made on the floor, often in colours, in front of the houses, considered auspicious.

*Rasa:* celestial dance of Krishna with gopies.

*Rituparna:* the name of a King.

*Sachiteertha:*

*Saraswathi:* goddess of learning, wife of Brahma, name of river.

*Shakunthala:* heroine of Kalidas's Sanskrit play.

*Sharavana:* the name of a month, follows Asadha, when the rains begin to pour down.

*Siddha:* one who has attained knowledge, literally "one who is ready" for liberation.

*Sky-haired one:* Sanskrit "Vyomakesha" name of Shiva.

***Sudarshana:*** disc-weapon of Vishnu.

***Swayamwara:*** a type of ancient marriage where the bride chose her preferred man from the assembly of invited kings.

***Vinoba:*** Vinobabhave, (1890-1967?), a well known disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and leader of Bhudaan-donation of land-movement.

***Wheel of sixty spokes:*** Hindu calendar that consists of a cycle of sixty years are compared to a wheel.

***Yaksha:*** a deity.

***Yugadhi:*** literally "the origin of an aeon", the Hindu New Year's Day.





**G.S. Sivarudrappa** (b.1926 - ) is a veteran of Kannada letters, an important poet and critic. To date he has published 12 collections of poems, 13 books of literary criticism, 3 travelogues and one biography. The fact that his Complete Poems have undergone three prints in the last nine years is a testimony of his popularity as poet. As a critic he values the importance of tradition and continuity in literature and finds the criterion for evaluation from within the canon of Kannada literature. He is the recipient of the prestigious Pampa Prashasthi in 1998. He is also honoured with Rajyotsava Award (1984), Sahitya Akademi Award (1984), Soviet Land Nehru Award (1973) and was the President of 61st All India Kannada Sahitya Sammelan at Davangere in 1992.

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